

# IS 289 Hudson River Middle School iZone Future State Design

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## Future State Design

- **Who We Are and What We Aspire to:**
- At IS 289, we want our students to engage in rich meaningful globally competitive work within a community of support (educators, peers and others) through which all those around them can be resources and empower students to be autonomous in their learning. Teachers' roles will expand from the current ones as primarily content and assessment experts to become learning coaches and advisors. All stakeholders will have access to a platform that will provide information about learning pathways and modalities, and student progress along those pathways, in real time, so that it can inform the provision of support and the identification of next steps along the way.
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- **Our Core Beliefs:**
- Schools need to find ways to support students in becoming aware of their learning needs and in setting personal goals, providing them with opportunities to pursue their current interests while expanding their interests and sense of purpose by connecting them with people and information in ever larger communities.

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- **Why We Need to Change:**
- IS 289 continues to expand the diversity of its student body. Starting in 2010-11 with 6th grade, we are phasing in ICT, serving special needs students, in all three grades. The demands of equipping a diverse group of young adolescents with the skills, habits of thinking and disposition to be responsible citizens in these next decades require a new approach to teaching and learning. Our design will involve students in understanding their learning needs and strengths; provide them, educators and families with real-time feedback on their goals; and support personalized plans to move students to their next goal. Although IS 289 has successfully integrated technology into many classrooms, we have not optimized our use of this resource for both learning and communication--key elements of our Future State
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- **Why We Are Focusing on Competencies:**
- We seek to develop learning competencies that lay out step by step conceptual knowledge so that students and teachers alike can know where students are in relation to desired goals and have clarity about the pathways along which students are expected to progress.
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- Often teachers are not able to determine where student learning lies on a continuum, and don't know what to do to close the gap between current learning and desired goals. Equally problematic is that STUDENTS don't have clarity about where they are in their own learning and what next steps they can take in order to pursue growth towards goals. Our hope is that explicit learning competencies can provide the clarity that teachers need to plan instruction and that students need in order to be meta-cognitive and focused on the next step in their learning.

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- **What Our Future State Design Will Look Like:**

- **For Students:**

- Over three years, a student will develop the skills and insight to take on ever more responsibility for setting goals, identifying needs, reflecting in small and big ways about where s/he was successful and where s/he needs to keep working. With the support of teacher-advisors and technology, a student will be able to track his/her accomplishments, get timely feedback, reflect and identify next steps.

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- **For Teachers:**

- Teachers will expand their roles and be even more collaborative in their development of curriculum, as well as evolve their ability to work with students across grade levels. Teachers will be able to support students in workshops settings that are multi-age, coaching students on specific content skills as well as how to access information. Teachers will spend less time than they do currently on whole class lessons and more time on advising and supporting students in workshops. Teachers will establish benchmarks that allow students to make productive choices, and will focus more on strategies than content, to create ACCESS to content. Teachers will initially strengthen their role as advisors and over time, become true learning facilitators

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- **For The Principal:**

- Currently, the principal manages and communicates the various aspects of the work, inspiring efforts and ensuring that stakeholders are involved in all critical pieces, and finding the resources to provide time to do both the thinking work and the detailed in-the-trenches work. As time progresses, as stakeholders are more and more invested in the work, and as faculty and students alike become clearer and clearer about where they are in their learning progression and what their next steps are, the principal's role can increasingly shift to being that of a personal coach to teachers, helping them set goals and supporting them in progressing towards them, and thereby modeling the interactions she hopes teachers will have with students.

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- **How We'll Achieve This:**
- At the core of our work will be curriculum design based on IS 289 competencies. We plan for the fall of 2012 to implement an integrated humanities unit about the presidential election that is designed using a competency-based framework. This prototype unit, organized around informational reading and writing, with embedded goal-setting and coaching, will be studied by the whole school faculty during weekly professional development and through analysis and ongoing engagement in our online community hub (ideally encompassing e-portfolios demonstrating student progress.) This work will equip us for more extensive implementation of competency-based curriculum design across grades and content areas in future phases.
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- **Our Future State Design emphasizes Five Core Areas and connects to iZone Principles of Competency Based Learning and Assessment, Multiple Learning Modalities, and New Roles for Students and Staff:**
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- ***Project Based Curricula***
  - To support student readiness for college and careers
  - Projects based on enduring understandings, questions, and inquiry
  - Real world authentic publication and expression
  - Explicit competencies
  - Multiple entry points and opportunities for deeper inquiry
- ***Community-Building***
  - In collaborative groups, in project groups, in the greater school community
  - As students find or create their place within groups, they assume increasing amounts of personal responsibility, in and beyond the group
- ***Digital citizenship***
  - Engage in a collaborative family, student, faculty inquiry to develop online policies that addresses issues of ethics, equity, efficacy in learning
- ***Flexible schedules***
  - Redesigned to enable flexible groupings by interests and learning modalities, by standards and achievement, by teacher-identified skills, by student-identified goals, by rethinking grade level structures
- ***Goalsetting and coaching***
  - 1-to-1 student-teacher coaching sessions to set and work towards goals

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- **How We Will Engage Stakeholders:**
- **Teachers**
- Teachers will redesign curriculum, unit projects and assessments in alignment with new thinking about competencies. They will alternate hosting classroom labsites for the early prototypes, and all faculty will be involved in the evaluation and revision process through this cycle of prototypes. Teachers will also engage in professional development to develop skills as personalized coaches.
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- **Students:**
- Student reflection around the learning process in the prototype units will provide essential feedback about the success of the design and necessary revisions. Our hope is that they will be primarily responsible for maintaining their "rooms" in our learning portal, with entries that contain their reflections, their plans for next steps, and artifacts of their learning.  
Although we will include families early in our future state design process, we need to find a balance between reassuring them that their children's needs are being met (especially with respect to preparing them for their high school experience) and inviting them to be partners in the innovation. It seems that having a portal prototype for families to share and provide feedback on (in focus groups) will be a necessary step to convincing them of the efficacy of our design.
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- **When we will be doing this:**
- We envision this work transpiring in Three Phases, roughly corresponding to each school year but with flexibility depending on how initial implementation goes. A prototyping process of implementation--> reflection--> refinement--> implementation--> reflection is necessary in order to engage all stakeholders--teachers, students, and families--and to build the necessary capacity and commitment to realize our core goals.
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- **How We'll Be Communicating About This:**
- **Within our school**
- Currently we use a wiki to which all faculty and staff are invited to participate in along with the 289iZonePlan googledoc. We will have a faculty meeting or professional development three Mondays a month in which to engage in study around the work and to share information.
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- **With iZone 360 Team with other Network Innovation Schools**
- The iZone 360 Team will have access to our wiki & google.doc. The Innovation Coach will also be a conduit for communication with this team, as well as for communication with other Network Innovation Schools. There will also be regular (monthly) meetings of the schools.
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- **With the Network more broadly**
- Monthly Network meetings would provide opportunities to communicate with all schools. The Network newsletter is also a vehicle for providing ongoing information about the work.
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- **What Supports We Have and Need:**
- IS 289 eager to continue our PD work on competency-based learning through Authentic Education and personal learning coaching, introduced by KUSA in the summer/fall of 2011 and, we hope, supported by Big Picture through 2012-13. We also need our component partner JumpRope to work with us in our second year to reorganize our grade-tracking in alignment with the adoption of competencies.

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- **Phase I--beginning September 2011**
- Full engagement of faculty and staff in prototype units study;
- PD in personalized learning coaching;
- launch of platform to capture and communicate student learning]
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- **Phase II**
- continue curriculum revision; revise and expand platform for communication;
- implement personalized learning coaching;
- introduce flexible scheduling
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- **Phase III**
- school learning platform will serve as communication base for all community stakeholders;
- personalized coaching fully implemented;
- curriculum/learning opportunities individualized for all students as negotiated by student and other stakeholders